

Yasuki Taka, Crab Clan Merchant

FIRE 2 Intelligence 4	AIR 3 Awareness 6
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Perception 5
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Yasuki Merchant 5

Honor/Glory: 1.2/2.7

Skills: Acting 5, Bard 5, Bojutsu 2, Commerce 9, Courtier 7, Etiquette 4, Gambling 6, Heraldry 5, Sincerity 8, Stealth 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Absolute Direction, Blackmail (you don't want to know how many), Clear Thinker, Luck (rank 1), Read Lips, Voice/Dark Secrets (Kolats, enemy of the Kolats), Small

Appearance: Taka is the epitome of the “greasy merchant,” a skinny man who is always perpetually smiling, rubbing his hands together, and counting his many koku. He dresses simply, more like a peasant than a samurai.

Personality/Background: Taka is the daimyo of the Yasuki family, and made his fortune on the high-quality sake which he brews in his home village. He travels all over the Empire, usually bringing along a merchant's cart loaded with expensive trinkets. He is always alert for an opportunity to make more koku. Taka is somewhat nervous and cowardly, but can screw up his courage to act when he has to. He prefers to work through others whenever there is danger involved.

Beneath his harmless exterior, Taka has many depths. He is a high-ranking member of the Kolats, and at the same time one of the Kolats' greatest enemies. He secretly runs anti-Kolats operations through his huge network of contacts and allies, while at the same time serving the Kolats loyally, never letting them guess that he is their enemy. At this Winter Court, Taka has other concerns (see “Goals” and “Recruiting for the Mini-Mission” below) but he is also on the lookout for those who can be recruited into the Kolats organization.

Goals: Taka's **primary goal** here is to sell lots of items and make lots of money. Your other handout explains what items you have to sell and for how much.

Taka's **second goal** is a personal one. Your wealth and success is founded on your sake breweries in Clear Water Village. The sake you make there is better (and cheaper) than any in the Empire, and you sell it to hundreds of castles, inns, restaurants, tea houses and geisha houses all across Rokugan. Unfortunately, in recent months a Mantis merchant named Koburo has begun making an equally good sake here on the Islands of Spice and Silk. The Mantis Clan's maritime trade routes enable Koburo to ship this sake cheaper and faster than you, and he is threatening to steal your markets. This cannot be allowed!

You have prepared a foul herbal concoction which, when slipped into Koburo's sake, will render it disgusting and undrinkable, ruining him. You need to recruit 3-4 ruthless, conscienceless

agents to sneak into Koburo's brewery and put this mixture into all the fermentation vats. This will require samurai who have no hesitation at undertaking such a dishonorable mission. Scorpions are an obvious choice, although you will have to be careful about indebting yourself to the Emperor's Underhand. Certain types of ronin and Crab will also work well, as well as any samurai who values money more than Honor. Needless to say, you'll want to stay away from Mantis.

Your **third goal** is (as always) to recruit new agents for the Kolat. You can do this by offering to carry out difficult and dishonorable favors for samurai who seem to be prey to their own emotions and weaknesses. You can recruit two new Kolat agents in this way, if the opportunity arises. (You have two "Owned by the Kolat" certs which you can hand out to those who accept your dishonorable offers.)

Recruiting for the Mini-Mission: If Taka thinks that a samurai seems a likely choice for dealing with his little task, he can offer them his personal protection and patronage. This is represented by a cert ("Patron: Yasuki Taka") which grants the following benefits: one rank of Wealth, one Excellent item (or two Fine items) added to outfit, and a Favor from the Yasuki family.

If the PC agrees to the mission, Taka says he will contact them when the time is right. The adventure will require a minimum of three PCs, a maximum of four. Keep the Chief Judge (Yoritomo) informed of how many recruits you have.

Taka's Treasures

As the proprietor of Taka's Treasures, you can offer the following items for sale:

Fine chops (2 koku, total of 3): "every daimyo will know you are a samurai of the utmost quality with these magnificent chops, crafted of beautiful ivory and inlaid with gold and mother-of-pearl."

Blessed Obi Beads (3 koku, total of 3): "blessed by the monks of Benten, Fortune of Romantic Love, these beads will ensure that you catch the eye of only the most worthy suitors."

Pouch of Jade Powder (3 koku, total of 2): "the same powder the Crab Clan uses to destroy the fearsome evils of the Shadowlands."

Excellent Puzzle Box (4 koku, total of 2): "Scorpions themselves won't fear to place their secrets inside." You do not have the solutions to opening these puzzle-boxes – at least not that you'll admit!

Terrifying War-Mempo (5 koku, total of 2): "Your enemies will quake and flee in abject terror when you wear this mask onto the battlefield!"

Magnificent War-Fan (6 koku, total of 2): "Your soldiers will have no difficulty seeing your orders with this splendid fan – and it doubles as a last-ditch defense against those pesky assassins!"

Elegant Court Mask (5 koku, total of 2): "be the wonder of the courts with this fine mask, specially crafted to display your features while giving away none of your secrets!"

Fine Kimono (8 koku, total of 2): "you'll be the talk of the court in this magnificent garment, woven from the finest quality silk."

Superb Kobuto (10 koku, total of 2): "a sturdy helmet of Kaiu manufacture, guaranteed to ward your head against the severest blows!"

Purified Scrolls (12 koku, total of 4): "writing on these scrolls will neither fade nor run with water, for they have been blessed and purified by the monks of Fukurokujin, Fortune of Wisdom!"

Crystal Knife (20 koku, total of 1): "a magnificent curiosity which the Unicorn brought back from the Burning Sands. See how the blade glows from within!"